

ORDERS FOR THURSDAY,
JANUARY 9, 2014

Mr. REID. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that when the Senate completes its business today, it adjourn until 10 a.m. tomorrow, January 9, 2014; that following the prayer and pledge, the morning hour be deemed expired, the Journal of proceedings be approved to date, and the time for the two leaders be reserved for their use later in the day; that following any leader remarks, the Senate proceed to a period of morning business until 12 noon, with Senators permitted to speak therein for up to 10 minutes each, the time equally divided between the two leaders or their designees, with the Republicans controlling the first 30 minutes and the majority controlling the final 30 minutes; and that at 12 noon all postcloture time be considered expired.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

PROGRAM

Mr. REID. Tomorrow we hope to make progress on the unemployment insurance extension. Senators will be notified when any votes are scheduled.

ORDER FOR ADJOURNMENT

Mr. REID. If there is no further business to come before the Senate, I ask unanimous consent that it adjourn under the previous order, following the remarks of my friend, the Senator from Ohio, Mr. PORTMAN.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Ohio is recognized.

ARMSTRONG FLIGHT CENTER

Mr. PORTMAN. Mr. President, I applaud the majority leader for his work on the Neil Armstrong Flight Research Center. This is something DIANNE FEINSTEIN has been very involved with and JAY ROCKEFELLER supported, and it is an appropriate way to pay tribute to Neil Armstrong, who was a constituent of mine and a dear friend. I spoke to his family about this. They believe it is an appropriate way to pay tribute to him as well.

He was a true hero, not just because of what he did as the first man to walk on the moon, but also the way he led his life subsequently. He was a humble hero to me and to so many others. I am delighted that through the action we just heard on the floor here a moment ago with the majority leader, we have now passed legislation which will go to the President for his signature. The Dryden Flight Research Center in California will now be renamed the Neil A. Armstrong Flight Research Center at the Dryden Aeronautical Test Range. So that is good news tonight. The Senate got something done.

THE BUDGET

I also wish to comment on what the Presiding Officer said earlier with re-

gard to the retirement provisions in the budget as it relates to our veterans. The military retirement issue is one I had great concerns about, and when I voted for the budget, it was my understanding that would be resolved. The Senator from Connecticut has a proposal he is supporting tonight from our colleague from New Hampshire. I am supporting a proposal as well from another colleague from New Hampshire, and how we pay for this is the subject of some debate, but we need to resolve this.

I think it is unfair for a couple of reasons; one is it singles out our military at a time when there are so many other ways in which we need to address our overspending in this country. I think it is not just for us to simply single out military retirees. I believe that is not consistent with the promises we made to them, and I believe it is in effect changing the rules midstream.

Second, there is a commission looking at this. The commission is looking at, in a comprehensive way, retirement, benefits, health care. That commission is both comprehensive and transparent and expected to report later this year.

So in my view, this certainly was not appropriate to be in the budget. It is about \$6 billion. We certainly should be able to find a pay-for in a budget of over \$3 trillion. Again, I commend those who are working on this.

I have cosponsored a particular approach which Senator AYOTTE of New Hampshire is proposing that is an anti-fraud provision for the child tax credit. I know there is some difference on that, but I think all of us want to be sure the child tax credit is being properly administered, and those who do not qualify for it or are ineligible for it should not access it.

At a time of record debt and deficits, we have to be sure there is not fraud, abuse, and waste in our government, and that is one example. So I hope we can find a way to come together on that and deal with that issue.

UNEMPLOYMENT INSURANCE

Finally, the majority leader talked a little about the legislation currently before this body to extend unemployment insurance. I wish to talk for a moment about where we are on that bill and say I was encouraged by the words of the majority leader. It sounds as if he is interested in looking at various ways we could pay for it. He indicated he is not in support of paying for it but would be willing to listen to some of our ideas. Let me say a couple things about it.

One, this is the emergency unemployment insurance on top of the roughly 26 weeks currently provided by States such as my State of Ohio. So it is additional emergency unemployment insurance on top of that.

The unemployment insurance ended at year-end, and the question is: Do we extend it? How do we extend it? How do we deal with the fact it adds to the deficit?

I voted, along with a handful of other Republicans, to proceed to this because I believe we ought to have a debate about, one, whether it should be paid for or not. I think it should be, and I won't be able to support it unless it is paid for; two, over the 3-month period—which the extension is, just a 3-month period—how can we improve the unemployment insurance program so it really works to get people employed?

As we know, the problem now is we have the highest number of people who are long-term unemployed we have ever had in this country. It is a historic rate, and it is a very troubling, sad situation, where people are over 27 weeks at historic levels. So we are not doing what we should be doing to connect those people who are unemployed to the jobs out there, clearly, by definition with so many people long-term unemployed. Let's improve this system. Let's provide people with the job skills and the tools they need to access the jobs available.

In my own State of Ohio, we are told we have about 100,000 jobs, many in advanced manufacturing, bioscience, and information technology, sectors of our economy where there is requirement for skills those who are unemployed do not have. Long-term unemployment insurance isn't providing them with the training and skills opportunities.

I think we ought to be able as a body to come up with reforms, working with the administration. The President has indicated his interest in doing that. That is the reason for the 3-month extension. But I certainly think we should pay for the 3-month extension.

The argument was made tonight that it is an emergency. The same Democrats who are saying that are saying the economy is improving. In any case, it violates the budget which was passed. We passed a budget just a few weeks ago. It was quite contentious here on the floor. The budget provided, for the first time in 4 years, a budget for the House and for the Senate to work against so we can start the appropriations process again. I supported that. It had no tax increases. It actually had net deficit reduction in it—barely but some. It didn't do everything, but it set those budget levels so we now have caps we can work against so we can begin the appropriations process, which involves oversight, which has not been done appropriately for 4 years now. It also involves prioritizing spending which has not been done.

Frankly, the agencies and departments of the Federal Government have been kind of on their own with these so-called continuing resolutions because there hasn't been the constitutional requirement that Congress appropriate. That is our constitutional duty, the power of the purse, which simply hasn't happened.

I think the budget is important. But by setting those caps, we made a statement to the American people: We are going to stick to these budget caps,